

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Inter-Departmental Memorandum

TO: Chief Engineer
Mr. James H. Kopf

DATE: September 1, 1998

FROM: State Traffic Engineer
Edward A. Bailey *EAB*

SUBJECT OR PROJECT NO: Truss Bridge Signing

INFORMATION COPY TO:

COUNTY: State-wide

Mr. Stephen L. McMahan, Assistant Chief Engineer-Operations
Mr. Hugh Long, District Engineer VII

Traffic Engineering Division (TED) has completed the state-wide study of clearance signing on truss bridges. Reiterating State Law Section 63-5-17 and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD):

- State Law Section 63-5-17 states, "the maximum vehicle height shall not exceed 13'6".
- MUTCD, Section 2C-34 states that the Low Clearance Sign is intended for use to warn of clearances less than the maximum vehicle height permitted plus 12 inches.

Therefore, the Low Clearance Sign should be used when the vertical clearance is 14'6" or less. The actual clearance should be shown to the nearest inch not exceeding the actual clearance.

The MUTCD further states that where the clearance is less than the legal limit (i.e. 13'6"), a sign should be placed at the nearest intersecting road or wide point in the road at which a vehicle can detour or turn around. Also, clearance should be checked periodically, particularly where resurfacing has taken place.

TED investigated the clearance signing at the Strong River Bridge on MS 28 in Simpson County where the tragic accident involving the Pinola Postmaster occurred. The actual overhead clearance on this bridge is 14'10". There are, in place, overhead clearance signs mounted on both ends of the bridge which warn of a 13'8" clearance. After verifying the actual clearance of this bridge, and with this bridge scheduled to be replaced in the near future, TED does not recommend installation of an audible or flashing early warning system on this bridge.

TED does, however, recommend uniform policy for signing of truss bridges state-wide. TED recommends that all truss bridges with a clearance of less than 15'9" be signed with overhead signs mounted on the ends of the bridge and advance ground mounted W12-2 warning signs. This is a conservative policy and exceeds the requirements of state law, but, with the relatively low number of these type bridges (18 state-wide with 15'9" or less clearance), and in the interest of developing a consistent policy, it is recommended that this policy be adopted.

EAB:evd

Attachment